

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Indefinitely Confined Electors

Definition

Voters indefinitely confined in their home or in a qualified facility [Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF), retirement home, residential care apartment complex, or adult family home] that is NOT served by special voting deputies. Elector must have applied for absentee ballots as an indefinitely-confined elector.

Application Requirements

- Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
- Absentee applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the election.
- Voter must check the box or otherwise indicate on the absentee application that they are indefinitely confined.

Duration of Requests

- Receive ballots automatically for as long as they return them (“permanent” status)
- If a ballot is not returned, send 30-day notice
 - Send 30-day notice after general elections only
 - If voter responds to notice, keep on permanent list
 - If voter does not respond to notice, cancel absentee application (remove from permanent list)

Deadline for Ballot Return

Friday 4:00 p.m. after the election if postmarked by Election Day

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Electors Served by Special Voting Deputies (SVDs)

Definition

Voters residing at a nursing home or in a qualified facility [Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF), retirement home, residential care apartment complex, or adult family home] that is served by special voting deputies.

Application Requirements

- If SVDs are conducting absentee voting at a facility prior to the 20th day before the election, the SVDs may register the individual to vote.
 - SVDs may register voters using their pre-nursing home address if the voter has an intent to return. These registrations must be forwarded to the respective municipal clerk.
- Absentee applications must be received by the respective deadline, 5:00 p.m. on Thursday for regular voters, 5:00 p.m. Friday for indefinitely confined voters.
 - Voter must check box or otherwise indicate on the absentee application that they are indefinitely confined.
 - SVDs may accept written absentee applications in-person from registered electors at the facility, if before the applicable deadline.

Duration of Requests

- As specified in the request (specific elections, calendar year, or permanent if indefinitely confined).
- If an elector on the permanent list does not vote an absentee ballot, the SVDs should ask them to either:
 - Sign a separate statement indicating they still want to receive ballots, *OR*
 - Enclose a blank ballot in the certificate envelope and sign the certification.
 - If the elector does not do either of the above, send them a notice via mail that their absentee application will be canceled.
 - The elector has 30 days to respond
 - Send notice after general elections only
 - If the elector does not respond to the notice, cancel the absentee application.

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Electors Served by Special Voting Deputies (SVDs), Continued

Time frame for conducting absentee voting in qualified facilities

- Between the 4th Monday before the election and the Monday before the election
 - Notice of date and time posted at facility no less than 24 hours before visit
 - Registered voters may request to vote absentee on the day the SVDs visit
 - Must use absentee application, not just certificate envelope.

Special Procedures

- If a voter is registered in another municipality, the clerk of the municipality where the voter is registered must forward an absentee ballot to the municipal clerk where the care facility is located.
 - The SVDs from the municipality where the nursing home is located administer the absentee ballot for that voter.
 - The municipal clerk where the nursing home is located then forwards the voted absentee ballot back to the municipal clerk where the voter is registered.
- Only SVDs may witness the absentee certification.
- No person other than a SVD or a relative of the elector may assist that person in voting.
 - Request for assistance must come from the elector.
- SVDs must visit the facility twice if any voter who has requested an absentee ballot was not available to vote during the first visit.
- Only if an absentee elector is not available to cast his or her ballot on two separate visits by the SVDs to the facility may the clerk mail the ballot to the elector.
 - Must transmit the ballot no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election.
- See “Absentee Voting in Nursing Homes” Manual for details.

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Electors at Special Voting Deputy-Eligible Facilities

Definition

Voters residing in a qualified facility [Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF), retirement home, residential care apartment complex, or adult family home] that is NOT served by special voting deputies. Also, does NOT include voters who are indefinitely confined.

- Use the indefinitely confined elector procedures for indefinitely confined electors who may reside at an SVD-eligible facility.

Application Requirements

- Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
- Absentee applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday.

Duration of Requests

As specified on absentee ballot application but no longer than a calendar year

Deadline for Ballot Return

Friday 4:00 p.m. after the election if postmarked by Election Day

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Military Voters

Definition

U.S. military service (at home or away), members of the merchant marine, civilian employees of the United States serving outside the U.S., peace corps volunteers, and their spouses or voting-age dependents.

Application Requirements

- No voter registration form is required.
- Must have resided in municipality immediately before entering the military.
- Absentee application must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election. However, for federal elections, military electors who are away from their residence due to active duty have until 5:00 p.m. on Election Day.
- The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is a common alternative form that is used by military electors. It counts as both a voter registration and absentee ballot application.
- The Affirmation/Declaration that accompanies the Federal Absentee Write-In Ballot (FWAB) also serves as an absentee application.

Duration of Request

- One calendar year, if not otherwise specified
 - Receive ballots for all offices

Deadline for Ballot Return

- Friday 4:00 p.m. after the election if postmarked by Election Day

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Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

- Available at military bases, embassies, and online at FVAP.gov. (This is not a ballot sent by the clerk.)
- May be used by both overseas and military electors.
 - A FWAB from a military elector may be accepted without a separate absentee application.
 - A FWAB from an overseas elector must be accompanied by a valid absentee request.
 - A FWAB typically contains a signed affirmation/declaration which serves as an absentee application for military electors, but must be received no later than the respective absentee request deadline to count as an application.
 - The affirmation/declaration must accompany the FWAB in order for the ballot to be counted. The affirmation/declaration must be completed and contain the signature of both the voter and the witness. It serves as the absentee certification.

Military Voters, Continued

Multiple Ballots - Priority

- Count whatever ballot you have received by Election Day
- If more than one ballot received by Election Day, all ballots are sent to the polling place for processing. Only one ballot is counted and the rest are rejected. The order of priority is:
 1. Official Ballot
 2. FWAB
- If ballots come in after Election Day, but before the deadline, and you have already counted a ballot on Election Day, reject the second ballot.

Special Procedures

- Requests are valid for up to 28 days after the date of discharge from military service.
- All military voters absentee ballots must be tracked in SVRS.
- See the Election Administration Manual and SVRS manual for further details on the administration and tracking of military ballots.

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Overseas Voters

Definition

An elector who is permanently outside of the U.S. with no intent to return to their residence.

- A person outside the U.S. for a finite period of time (vacation, work, education) with an intent to return is NOT an overseas voter.
 - May only vote for federal offices (President, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress).

Application Requirements

Standard “by-mail” rules apply:

- Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
- Absentee applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday.
- Must have lived in the district immediately before moving overseas
- Voting-age children of an overseas elector are eligible to vote as an overseas elector even if they have never lived in the district.
 - Votes from last address in the district
- Home may not be owned by them anymore or not exist anymore.

Duration for Request

One calendar year, if not otherwise specified

- Receive ballots for federal offices only

Deadline for Ballot Return

Friday 4:00 p.m. after the election if postmarked by Election Day

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

- Available at military bases, embassies, and online at FVAP.gov. (This is not a ballot sent by the clerk.)
- Cannot be accepted unless the election has an absentee application on file.

Multiple Ballots - Priority

- Count whatever ballot you have received by Election Day
- If more than one ballot received by Election Day, all ballots are sent to the polling place for processing. Only one ballot is counted and the rest are rejected. The order of priority is:
 1. Official Ballot
 2. FWAB

Special Procedures

- All overseas voters absentee ballots must be tracked in SVRS
- See the Election Administration manual and SVRS manual for further details on the administration and tracking of overseas ballots.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Regular Absentee Voters – By Mail

Definition

Any otherwise qualified elector who for any reason is unable or unwilling to appear at the polling place.

Application Requirements

- Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
- Absentee applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday.

Duration of Request

- As specified on application.
- For calendar year applications (1/1 – 12/31)
 - If a ballot is not returned for a general election, remove the elector from the absentee list and send them a notice within 5 days.
 - If voter responds to notice, add them back to the absentee list and continue to send ballots.
 - If voter does not respond to notice, they remain off the list.
 - Voter can reactivate request by contacting you.

Deadline for Return of Ballot

Friday 4:00 p.m. after the election if postmarked by Election Day

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Fax/Email/Online

Definition

Only military and permanent overseas electors may receive their ballot by fax or email or may access their absentee ballot online at <http://myvote.wi.gov>. The clerk must honor the requested method of transmission.

Application Requirements

- Voter registrations may not be faxed/emailed. Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
- Absentee applications must be received by the respective deadlines for all electors. See military and overseas sections above.
- Any registered voter may submit their absentee ballot request by email or fax.

Special Notes

- Only military and permanent overseas electors may receive a ballot by fax/email, please see those specific instructions for more details.
- An original application with “wet” signature must be received.
 - If you are using the combination application/certification certificate envelopes, the signature on the envelope suffices as an original application with “wet” signature.
- When emailing or faxing a ballot to a military or overseas voter:
 - Transmit the initialed ballot and face of the certificate envelope along with instructions for voting and returning the ballot.
 - The voted ballot can NOT be returned by fax/email.
 - On Election Day (if using optical scan systems), remake the ballot so it can be processed through the voting equipment.
 - See Election Day manual or the GAB-104 for specific instructions on remaking ballot.

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In-Person Absentee Voting in Clerk's Office

Definition

Any eligible elector may request to vote an absentee ballot in person at the office of the municipal clerk.

Application Requirements

- Voter registration may occur in-person at the office of the municipal clerk up until 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election.
 - No in-person absentee voting may occur on the Saturday, Sunday, or Monday immediately preceding the election.
- In-person absentee voting begins on the 3rd Monday before Election Day and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election.
- If the voter only wishes to vote absentee at a single election, the combination application/certification certificate envelope will suffice as the absentee application.
- If the voter wishes to receive ballots for future elections, they must fill out the standard absentee ballot request.
- Ballots requested in-person may NOT be removed from the clerk's office by the voter.

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Provisional Ballots

Definition

If the absentee elector was required to provide proof of residence with their absentee ballot and does not, the election officials are to treat that absentee ballot as a provisional ballot.

Procedure

The clerk should attempt to contact the absentee voter as quickly as possible to inform them that their ballot was treated provisionally and advise them of how to provide the necessary information.

Deadline for voter to supply missing information

4:00 p.m. on the Friday after the election

Special Notes

- Make sure all appropriate canvassing boards (county and municipality) are informed if the elector provides the missing information.
- All provisional ballots must be recorded in SVRS on Election Night. See the SVRS Application Training manual for directions.
- Please see the Election Administration manual, Post-Election Activities chapter for more information.

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New & Former Residents – Presidential Only

Definition

Any new resident of the state who would be an eligible elector except for the 28-day residency requirement, or any former resident of the state who is ineligible in their new home state to vote due to a residency requirement, may apply for a presidential-only absentee ballot.

Application Requirements

- New resident:
 - Must apply and vote in-person, no earlier than 27 days before the election, and no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election.
 - Note-This time frame is specific to a new resident voting for president only.
 - Voter may also apply and vote for 'President only' on Election Day at the polling place.
 - Must fill out a special absentee application/cancellation (GAB-141).
 - Note-Applicant does not complete GAB-131 and is *not* registered.
 - Voter must provide proof of residence.
- Former resident:
 - Must apply within 24 months of leaving Wisconsin.
 - By-mail application using a special absentee application (GAB-140).
 - This form must be notarized.
 - There is no specific deadline before the election to apply.
 - Voter not required to provide proof of residence.
- See the SVRS Application Training manual for directions on entering electors into SVRS.

Deadline for Return of Ballot

Friday 4:00 p.m. after the election if postmarked by Election Day

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Hospitalized Electors

Definition

Any qualified elector may register and request an absentee ballot by agent if hospitalized.

Application Requirements

- The absentee ballot application may not be filed earlier than 7 days before the election and no later than 5:00 p.m. on Election Day.
- If not already registered to vote, the hospitalized elector may register to vote by agent up to 5:00 p.m. on Election Day.
- Must submit a signed absentee application (GAB-121) which indicates that the elector is hospitalized.
- The agent must provide a proof of identification to the clerk when delivering the absentee application.

Procedure

- Upon receiving a valid application, the clerk provides the agent with an initialed absentee ballot and certificate envelope.
- The agent delivers the ballot to the hospitalized elector.
- The hospitalized elector votes the ballot in the presence of the agent, seals it in the certificate envelope, and signs the certificate envelope.
- The agent signs the certificate envelope as the witness and returns it to the clerk.
- Fax/Email requests may be used in combination with this procedure.

Deadline for Ballot Return

- The agent may return the absentee ballot to the polling place, municipal clerk or mail the absentee ballot.
- If the absentee ballot is mailed it must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the Friday after the election if postmarked by Election Day

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Sequestered Jurors

Definition

Any eligible registered elector who indicates that the reason they are requesting an absentee ballot is because they are a sequestered juror.

Application Requirements

Must submit an absentee application to the clerk that indicates that the elector is a sequestered juror no later than 5:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Procedure

- If the application is received before 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election:
 - The clerk may transmit the ballot as requested by mail
- If the application is received after 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election:
 - The municipal clerk shall immediately take the ballot to the court in which the elector is serving as a juror and deposit it with the judge.
 - The judge shall recess court, as soon as convenient, and give the elector the ballot.
 - The judge shall then serve as witness and shall deliver the ballot to the clerk who shall deliver it to the polling place.